

Finding the Flow

By Jackie Benton

Photography by Christopher Davidson



When Christopher Davison and David Davison of Realty Restoration, LLC and Christy Bowen, owner of Twelve Stones Designs, first walked into the little circa 1967-era home nestled in the Northwest Hills neighborhood to begin renovation work, they thought they had stepped back in time.

"It was like a time capsule to the Sixties, with a few Eighties-era updates in the kitchen. Heavy cut-glass fixtures drooped from the ceiling, and harvest gold countertops and copper-tone appliances greeted us in the kitchen," remembers Bowen, a certified kitchen and bath designer. "The house was chopped up into many different rooms with no relation to one another. Opening up the space would allow light to filter through the whole house."

"The entire house needed to be upgraded. No finish had been touched in 48 years," says Christopher Davison, A.I.A. and architectural lead for Realty Restoration, LLC. "The dark stained wood paneling and brick floors made for very dark spaces, with laminate countertops and popcorn ceilings throughout. But the house was physically in good condition, and the beautiful wood windows were still in great shape."

The team decided there were enough basic aspects of the home that were in good enough condition that the home could be renovated without completely building anew. This was especially good news for their clients, whom Bowen notes had a special connection to this particular project that made their restoration work especially meaningful. "The wife of the couple that contracted us actually grew up in the home, and she inherited it after her mother passed," explains Bowen.





Realty Restoration, LLC and Twelve Stones Designs have developed a nationally award-winning design/build relationship. "We often refer to our approach as 'The Trifecta of Design/Build,' and we operate as a team," says David Davison, certified remodeler and president of Realty Restoration, LLC. "Since our company self-performs a large portion of our work, we are able to develop detailed and accurate cost models along the way during the design/build process."

With this particular project, the Davisons and Bowen applied their Trifecta approach to perfection. A meeting with their clients determined where they needed to work their magic. To make the 48-year-old home feel more spacious and suitable for family gatherings and entertaining, a new floor plan was needed. The ceiling plane was

raised to a vault in the existing den to extend seamlessly to a new back porch extension to accommodate a new outdoor living space. This new design created a sense of open living and flow from room to room, and took advantage of the scenic views offered by the Hill Country.

"The plumbing and electrical systems needed complete updating," recalls David Davison. "The venting system was antiquated or non-existent. Spaces were illuminated with layers of light sources and types that included solar tubes, skylights and LED accent lighting. A new dual zoned HVAC system and tankless water heaters throughout the home as well as a newly installed standing seam metal roof helped keep costs down as well as make a much smaller energy footprint."

Bowen and Christopher Davison worked together to create a dream kitchen for their

clients, who loved to entertain and anticipated visits from family members who live in Austin.

The addition of a less formal central dining space that could easily accommodate six to eight diners eliminated the need for both a breakfast area and dining room, while a gourmet kitchen with island seating encourages visitors to relax and converse with the host and hostess during meal prep time. The clients also wanted a new home office and a theater room, upgrades made to the bathrooms and better storage.

"It's a spacious, well-planned kitchen with a Sub-Zero®/Wolf® appliance package, custom pullouts, large pullout pantry, exotic Sienna Beige granite, custom masonry range top surround, stone and handmade glazed tiles, custom leaded glass doors, specialty cabinetry finish custom-created by our paint artisan,





and a coffered tin ceiling,” says Bowen. “We addressed their storage issues with a large custom utility cabinet pullout and tilt-down drying racks stored in a wall cavity behind barn-style sliding doors.”

“Our award-winning kitchen designs utilize very specific storage solutions,” explains David Davison. “Our team routinely uses the concept of “aging in place” or “universal design” so the space will transcend physical and age differences to make it more appealing to potential buyers in the future, while providing a pleasant cooking, dining and entertaining experience for the current homeowner.”

That same attention to detail was also part of the master bed and bath design, with Snowstorm granite countertops in the master bath, and a master bedroom custom-built closet. “The master closet was specifically designed to hold the exact contents of the homeowner’s belongings. Intricate measurements were taken of their items as well as counts of each article to ensure a place for everything and everything in its place,” explains Bowen. “Measurements were also taken to ensure things like the pullout ironing board being in an ergonomic location for both husband and wife.” These measurements, such as reach and grab distances, elbow and sightline heights also helped with placement of clothing rods, shelving and drawers.

As for the end result, “The house flows much better now,” says Bowen. “Even though



there are still distinct spaces, there is a logical path for entertaining and everyday living,” she says. “There are zones: work zones, entertaining zones, private zones, etc. But there is no longer a maze of long hallways and dark corners. The layout is intuitive now; bright, cheerful and inviting.”

“Our number one goal is to show potential clients how our team delivers projects on a timely basis, with cost effective and comprehensive problem-solving solutions that avoid cost increases during the construction phase,” says David Davison. “By concentrating on the details of smarter

solutions, the end result is our clients are left with an amazing space they are proud to show off to their friends and family for many years to come.” ■

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